

**SUMMARY OF THE
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MAY 8, 2000**

The Board of Directors of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference at 9:30 a.m. on May 8, 2000 in response to issues raised during their previous meeting of May 4, 2000. Dr. Jim Pearson followed the agenda distributed previously to Board members. Action items from this meeting are shown in Attachment A, and the list of participants is shown in Attachment B.

AGENDA ITEMS

Delaying NELAC Accreditation until January 2001

Initial implementation of the NELAC standards was envisioned with a target date of July 1, 1999 (NELAC V) to announce the first group of accrediting authorities and the target date of July 1, 2000 (NELAC VI) to announce the first group of accredited laboratories. These dates were believed reasonable with steady progress on resolving impediments. The first class of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP)-recognized accrediting authorities was announced on June 28, 1999 during the opening plenary session of NELAC V. These accrediting authorities have successfully worked together to identify and resolve all but one of the implementation issues that have subsequently arisen.

Based on the currently approved standards, a laboratory that is applying for NELAC accreditation must satisfy all the conditions of the NELAC standards, including two successful analyses of proficiency testing (PT) samples containing each analyte for which they are accredited (see 2.2.3). Due to a shortfall in the availability of PT samples and the limited time since the complete list was published on the NELAC website, the accrediting authorities have identified this as an insurmountable obstacle to a laboratory's meeting deadlines associated with the July 1, 2000 target date.

Ms. Jeanne Hankins of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has discussed possible solutions with the NELAP-recognized accrediting authorities; since each accrediting authority is operating under the legislative authority of its state, a universal solution has not been found. The Board discussed various alternatives by which NELAC could respond. Following this extended discussion, it was moved, seconded and approved on a 5 yea, 1 nay rollcall vote that announcement of the first class of NELAC-accredited laboratories be postponed until January 2001, and that this decision be posted on the NELAC Website as soon as possible.

Process for Proposing Options

During NELAC Vi, EPA expressed concerns about funding support for the conference due to their limited budget. In response, the Board asked the Transition Committee to explore options for future NELAC structure and funding, and to submit a report prior to NELAC VI. The Board discussion of the report included authority, funding, scheduling, roles and responsibilities, and legal concerns. The Board supported the need for EPA to have an integral role in the future of

NELAC. Dr. Brokopp offered to seek specific information on other organizational models, and Dr. Jackson agreed to draft a letter for Dr. Pearson's signature, requesting a meeting with EPA Office of Research and Development (ORD) Administrator Norine Noonan to discuss the proposals, seek consensus, and to request support for implementing organizational changes.

Status of Colorado Accrediting Authority

Ms. Hankins reviewed the fiscal dilemma faced by the Colorado Department of Health and the Environment to operate as a NELAP-recognized accrediting authority due to the failure to obtain legislative authority to assess fees for NELAC accreditation. This would prevent them from performing the required on-site assessments within the current timeframe. Following discussion, and in context of the above decision to delay announcement of the first class of accredited laboratories until January 2001, it was agreed that Colorado should be encouraged to maintain its status as a NELAP-recognized accrediting authority. The interim status provision would allow a laboratory to be NELAC accredited for a maximum of 12 months without an on-site assessment. If Colorado was unable to perform the needed on-site assessments during that period, any laboratory accredited by Colorado could then seek NELAC accreditation from another state. As a fall-back option, Dr. Jackson stated that New York was prepared to perform any required on-site inspections for Colorado, for a fee. Dr. Pearson asked the sense of the Board on these proposals and there were no disagreements.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of this Board is scheduled for June 22, 2000 and will include the NELAC committee chairs.

**NEW ACTION ITEMS
NELAC BOARD OF TELECONFERENCE
MAY 8, 2000**

Item No.	Action	Status
1	The Board's vote to delay announcement of the first class of NELAC-accredited laboratories to January 2001 to be posted on the NELAC website as soon as possible.	
2	Dr. Brokopp will explore organizational issues with ECOS.	
3	Dr. Jackson will draft a letter to EPA requesting a meeting to discuss a conceptual proposal for the future of NELAC implementation.	

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MAY 8, 2000**

Name	Affiliation	Address
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